

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-10 IO-12 ADP-00 PRS-01 SSO-00

NSCE-00 INRE-00 L-03 PM-09 NSC-10 SS-14 RSC-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-09 NSAE-00 PA-03 USIA-12 (ADP) R

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NEA/ P - MR. BRIGGS

AF/ N - MR. CLARK

S/ PRS - MR. BRAY

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TO AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI IMMEDIATE

INFO USINT ALGIERS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY

USINT CAIRO PRIORITY

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA PRIORITY

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN PRIORITY

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MANAMA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT PRIORITY

AMCONSUL ORAN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY

AMCONSUL TANGIER PRIORITY

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AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

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USCINCEUR

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BEIRUT POUCH BAGHDAD. JIDDA POUCH SANAA

E. O. 11652, GDS
TAGS: PFOR LY PBOR

SUBJECT: EXCERPTS OF TRANSCRIPT, PRESS NEWS BRIEFING TODAY

Q. TWO THINGS ARE OUTSTANDING IN AFRICA, IF I RECALL IT CORRECTLY. ONE, THE SUDAN, AND THE OTHER IS LIBYA. ANY ANSWER FROM BOTH PLACES? SUDAN -- WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO THE TERRORISTS? LIBYA, WHAT ABOUT THE RESTRICTED AREA AND THE SHOOTING OF OUR C-130?

A. WITH RESPECT TO THE FIRST, ENDRE, TO MY UNDERSTANDING OF IT, THE INVESTIGATION BY THE SUDANESE GOVERNMENT CONTINUES.

Q. THIS IS A RATHER SLOW PROCESS?

A. IT'S A RATHER IMPORTANT MATTER. AND WE WOULD ASSUME THAT WHEN THAT INVESTIGATION IS COMPLETED TO THE SATISFACTION OF THE SUDANESE GOVERNMENT THAT IT WOULD SPEAK TO THE BURDEN OF YOUR QUESTION WITH RESPECT TO SUDANESE LEGAL PROCESSES.

NOW, WITH RESPECT TO THE SECOND, YES, THE ANSWER IS YES AND NO, THE QUESTION BEING HAVE WE A RESPONSE FROM THE LIBYANS. IT'S YES AND NO BECAUSE, YES, WE WERE PRESENTED

A NOTE THIS MORNING HERE AND REJECTED IT IMMEDIATELY.
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ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWSOM RECEIVED THE LIBYAN CHARGE D'AFFAIRES AT THE LATTER'S REQUEST IN MID-MORNING. MR. NEWSOM WAS PRESENTED A NOTE FROM THE LIBYAN GOVERNMENT WHICH HE REJECTED AS NOT BEING IN CONSONANCE WITH ACCEPTED STANDARDS OF INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE. PARENTHETICALLY I MIGHT SAY THAT HE RECEIVED THE NOTE, READ IT, PUT IT BACK IN THE ENVELOPE IN WHICH IT WAS PRESENTED AND RETURNED IT TO THE LIBYAN CHARGE D'AFFAIRES.

NOW, WITHOUT GOING INTO THE CONTENT OF THE NOTE IN DETAIL, LET ME SAY THAT THE TONE WAS POLEMIC, INDEED THERE WERE FOUR PAGES OF POLEMICS, AND THE NOTE DENIED WHAT WE KNOW TO BE A FACT, THAT OUR AIRCRAFT WAS FIRED UPON BY LIBYAN AIRCRAFT.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWSOM TOLD THE LIBYAN CHARGE D' AFFAIRES -- AND I QUOTE -- THE UNITED STATES DESIRES GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE LIBYAN ARAB REPUBLIC. WE HAVE SUBSTANTIAL INTERESTS IN COMMON. WE WISH TO RESOLVE SUCH DIFFERENCES AS EXIST IN A BUSINESS- LIKE MANNER. WE CAN- NOT, HOWEVER, ACCEPT AS SATISFACTORY OR CONSONANT WITH A BUSINESS- LIKE RESOLUTION OF OUR DIFFERENCES THE REPLY AS PRESENTED. WE REGARD THE REPLY AS UNSATISFACTORY, BOTH IN FORM AND IN SUBSTANCE.

Q. HOW LONG WAS THIS CONVERSATION OR THIS VISIT?

A. IT DOESN' T SOUND -- I DON' T KNOW, MURREY -- BUT IT DOESN' T SOUND TO ME AS THOUGH IT WAS EXTENDED.

Q. WELL, YOU SAID IT WAS A FOUR- PAGE LETTER. I WOULD ASSUME IT MIGHT HAVE TAKEN A BIT OF TIME TO EVEN SCAN.

A. I' LL SEE IF I CAN GET THE FIGURE FOR YOU.

Q. IT WAS A RELATIVELY BRIEF VISIT, IS THAT THE POINT? CAN YOU TELL US ALSO WHETHER THE LIBYAN STATEMENT RAISED THE PREVIOUS CLAIM TO A RESTRICTED AIR ZONE?

A. THAT' S ALL I KNOW AT THIS POINT ABOUT THE NOTE, MURREY. LET ME LOOK INTO THAT FOR YOU.

A. CHARLES, YOU TALK ABOUT NOT BEING IN CONSONANCE WITH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ACCEPTED STANDARDS OF INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE, AND YOU SAY THAT THE LETTER WAS POLEMICAL IN TONE. DID IT ALSO USE FOUL AND ABUSE LANGUAGE?

A. I' LL STAND ON WHAT I HAVE SAID WITH RESPECT TO POLEMICS.

Q. IS IT JUST THE POLEMICS THAT YOU OBJECT TO HERE, OR IS THERE SOMETHING MORE THAT YOU OBJECT TO.

A. WELL, I THOUGHT I SAID IT DENIED WHAT WE KNEW TO BE A FACT.

Q. BUT THAT IS PART OF THE SUBSTANCE. I' M TALKING ABOUT THE FORM. WHAT WAS SO OBJECTIONABLE ABOUT THE FORM?

A. THE POLEMICS.

Q. JUST THE POLEMICS?

Q. CHARLES, WHAT IS THE PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCE OF THIS. I MEAN, WHAT DO WE DO? WHAT DOES THE U. S. DO, I SHOULD SAY?

A. LET ME GO ON BACKGROUND TO SAY THAT SINCE THIS NOTE DOES NOT EXIST IN OUR EYES, WE CONSIDER THAT THE LIBYAN GOVERNMENT STILL OWES US WHAT WE ASKED FOR, THAT IS, AN EXPLANATION OF THIS MATTER.

Q. DID THE NOTE, CHARLES, ACKNOWLEDGE THAT LIBYAN FIGHTERS PURSUED THE HERCULES C-130?

A. SORRY, NICK, I'VE NOT READ THE NOTE. I THINK THE IMPORTANT FACT IS THAT IT DENIED THAT THOSE FIGHTERS FIRED ON OUR AIRCRAFT.

Q. IT DIDN'T DENY THE FACT THAT THERE WAS AN AERIAL ENCOUNTER? I MEAN, IT DIDN'T GO SO FAR AS TO SAY THERE WAS NO INCIDENT.

A. I'M SORRY, I REALLY HAVE NOT READ THE NOTE.

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Q. CHARLES, DO YOU KNOW WHO SIGNED THE NOTE?

A. NORMALLY A NOTE OF THIS KIND WOULD BE INITIALLED BY THE SENIOR DIPLOMATIC OFFICER IN THE MISSION, IN THIS CASE, THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES.

Q. WAS THERE ANY RESPONSE IN LIBYA TO THE -- IN ADDITION TO THE RESPONSE HERE, WAS THERE ANY THERE TO THE PRESENTATION MADE BY THE UNITED STATES BY ITS CHARGE?

A. MURREY, LET ME GO ON BACKGROUND, BECAUSE I AM NOT ENTIRELY CERTAIN OF THE FACTS, BUT MY RECOLLECTION IS THAT THE ONLY OFFICIAL ACKNOWLEDGE THAT ANYTHING UNTOWARD

HAPPENED WAS A DENIAL BY THE LIBYAN FOREIGN MINISTER IN THE LAST DAY OR SO, AND I THINK PERHAPS IN (BENGHAZI) CAIRO, WHEN HE WAS ASKED BY REPORTERS, THAT SUCH AN INCIDENT HAD TAKEN PLACE.

Q. CHARLES, DO YOU RECALL WHEN THE LAST TIME WAS THAT THE U. S. GOVERNMENT REJECTED A NOTE?

A. NO, BUT I CAN UNDERTAKE TO FIND OUT. THAT MAY BE DIFFICULT TO DO, AL.

Q. CHARLIE, DID MR. NEWSOM CONSULT WITH ANYONE ELSE BEFORE REJECTING THE NOTE, OR DID HE TAKE THAT ACTION UNILATERALLY?

A. I THINK YOU CAN ASSUME THAT WHATEVER MR. NEWSOM DOES, WITH OR WITHOUT CONSULTATION, IS DONE IN A CONSIDERED WAY, AND FORMALLY AND THOUGHTFULLY.

Q. CHARLES, ARE THERE GRADATIONS -- IN OTHER WORDS, IN DIPLOMATIC PRACTICE HERE, I WOULD ASSUME THAT, ONE, ONE ACCEPTS THE NOTE; TWO, ONE ACCEPTS THE NOTE BUT DISAGREES WITH IT; AND, THREE, ONE REFUSES TO ACCEPT THE NOTE. IS THAT RIGHT?

A. AS A ROUGH SKETCH OF --

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Q. SO THIS IS THE MOST DIRE THING THAT COULD BE DONE, IN OTHER WORDS, TO SHOW U. S. DISSATISFACTION, BESIDES YES.

A. THIS WAS A FAIRLY FORMAL ACT.

Q. WAS THE MEETING ITSELF CONDUCTED IN A BUSINESS- LIKE WAY, THOUGH, CHARLES. DID MR. NEWSOM RAISE HIS VOICE AND SHOUT AT MR. BEN MUSA. DID MR. BEN MUSA SHOUT AT MR. NEWSOM?

Q. DID THE CHARGE REPLY IN ANY WAY, DO YOU KNOW?

A. NOT TO MY KNOWLEDGE.

A- A SMALL QUESTION. THERE WERE REPORTS IN THE ISRAELI PRESS THAT MR- ISHMAELI IS COMING TO WASHINGTON FOR ANOTHER ROUND OF TALKS.

A. THERE ARE NO PLANS FOR THAT. ROGERS

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